Island County WSU Beach Watcher Intertidal monitoring Program: A model for volunteer based data collection

Jan Holmes*, Island County WSU Beach Watchers

Keywords: Volunteer, Intertidal, Monitoring, Protocol

The goal of the Beach Watcher monitoring program is to collect baseline data over time at specific monitoring sites, and to document changes to beach slope, substrate, and intertidal communities. Data collection is now in its ninth year. We currently monitor twenty-six sites on Whidbey Island, ten sites on Camano Island, and one site (Rosario Beach) in Skagit County. Our protocol has three components: 1. The beach profile, which measures the slope of the beach and inventories substrate and classes of marine invertebrates and seaweeds. 2. Quadrat sampling at three tide heights to determine density and diversity of invertebrate and seaweed species. 3. Yearly species lists. All beaches have been classified using the Marine and Estuarine Habitat Classification System for Washington State. This presentation highlights results from selected beaches.